

**Risk of abuse escalates**

Commissioner Susan Ryan suggests the government keep a national register for powers of attorney, so it would be clear who had control of an older person's finances (The Age, 9/11). Financial powers of attorney also need guidelines, as there are countless opportunities for an older person's finances to be managed inappropriately. They can withdraw money from an older person's bank account for their own purposes, with no questions asked. They can also control how much older people spend, and what they spend it on.

Legal mechanisms need to be implemented to protect older people. As economic conditions worsen, older people, particularly those with diminished capacity due to dementia and depression, are at a greater risk than ever of being financially abused.

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